CONFLICT STYLES AND ATTACHMENT

Hour 2: Communication and Conflict Resolution for Couples
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CONFLICT PATTERNS

➤ Learned and passed down generations

➤ Demand -withdraw pattern: partner criticizes, nags and makes demands of the other, while the other partner avoids confrontation, withdraws and becomes silent (Eldridge, Sevier, Jones, Atkins & Christensen, 2007)

➤ Research confirms women are in the demanding role and men withdraw as a typical pattern.

➤ Can escalate to attack-withdraw or attack -attack
ATTACHMENT STYLE

➤ Formed by the interaction of one’s unique genetic make-up and specific experiences in the environment

➤ Begins in utero with the release of maternal hormones on the developing fetus which creates certain neurobiological vulnerability (Glynn, Wadhaw & Sandman, 2000)

➤ As grow and develop, family system becomes the social influence of forming attachment

➤ Can and do change throughout the lifespan due to different experiences and exposures
ADULT ATTACHMENT

➤ Child attachment carries into adulthood

➤ Romantic relationships can be a reflection of a parental relationship (Fish & Paklov, 2008).

➤ Secure attachments: Conflict less threatening; Recover better compared to those with avoidant or anxious attachments

➤ Secure more likely to self-regulate and adapt to complicated situations (Sroufe, 2005)
EFT: ATTACHMENT AND CONFLICT

➤ Love: Basic secure connection with someone else
➤ Emotional dependence for nurturing, soothing and protection
➤ We begin connected and responsive to our partners; drops off, feel disconnected
➤ Don’t express our needs clearly; lose connection
➤ Talk at surface level vs express attachment need and be reassured
SECURE ATTACHMENT

➤ Child feels a sense of security

➤ Physical and emotional regulation with caretakers who are accessible and available

➤ Secure base allows for exploration and curiosity leading to self-confidence and autonomy

➤ Brain facilitates adaptive mental health—Neurocognitive skills such as emotional regulation, social skills, empathy, compassion, problem-solving, and flexibility are positively influenced by feelings of security and safety
SECURE ATTACHMENT

➢ Negative experiences can threaten and lead to negative emotions but caregiver helps calm and regulate the emotional intensity providing a safe haven

➢ Consequently, the child learns to regulate emotions and develop a positive sense of self and others

➢ Emotional development: Core beliefs are stored in the emotional memories of the limbic system and later retrieved as implicit memories
ATTACHMENT AND CONFLICT: SECURE

➤ Secure type: Low avoidance, low anxiety
➤ Generally happy in relationships
➤ Sensitive and responsive to others
➤ Think of connection as comfort and support
➤ Feel loved, accepted and competent
➤ Can bring up issues and do not worry about relationship
➤ Listen, value and have empathy for others
INSECURE

➤ Caregivers who are not attuned to the emotional experiences and core beliefs forming in their child’s development may interact in ways that are avoidant or dismissive.

➤ The child then develops a negative view of attachment needs and experience unpleasant emotions.

➤ The lack of response and accompanying negative beliefs prompt children to become overly autonomous or independent and develop a negative view of others.
AMBIVALENT ATTACHMENT

➤ Caregivers are emotionally immature and not meeting their own needs, an ambivalent attachment results

➤ Child is preoccupied with the parent’s needs, feels unsafe to explore the world and develops negative beliefs. This results in the child feeling preoccupied or anxious
ATTACHMENT AND CONFLICT: PREOCCUPIED

➤ Preoccupied type: Low avoidance, high anxiety
➤ Worry about what others think of them
➤ Do not consider their own thoughts and feelings
➤ Need to be close to others but do so in clingy way
➤ Need validation and approval
➤ Are concerned that others do not validate them
➤ Doubt their own worth in relationships
FEAR OR DISORGANIZED

➤ Families with neglect, abuse and/or chaos

➤ Caregivers become the source of fear and anxiety rather than calm and reassurance

➤ Creates on-going conflict and releases stress hormones throughout the body

➤ Children often disconnect or dissociate, impacting brain connections involved with self-awareness, narrative memory and rational problem-solving (Schore, 2000)

➤ Result is poor coping, mood regulation problems and behavioral control issues
ATTACHMENT AND CONFLICT: DISMISSIVE-AVOIDANT

➤ Dismissing-avoidant: High avoidance, low anxiety
➤ Deny need to be close to others
➤ Need to feel independent and self-sufficient
➤ Minimize the importance of relationships
➤ Hide their feelings from others and self
➤ Think of others in less positive ways
➤ Cope by distancing
ATTEMPTMENT AND CONFLICT: FEARFUL-AVOIDANT

➤ Fearful-avoidant: High avoidance, high anxiety
➤ Think of themselves as flawed, dependent and helpless
➤ Do not trust others
➤ Expect to be hurt
➤ Want to be close to others but fear this
➤ Avoid intimacy
➤ Suppress feelings
EFT: CONFLICT AND ARGUMENTS

➤ Conflict arguments: Origins are form of protest from one partner about not feeling connected, trusted or safe and secure with the other

➤ Habitual patterns emerge but need to understand the feeling or meaning behind the conflict; emotional focus of EFT

➤ Build a safe haven and connection—better able to manage conflict
WHAT HAPPENS:

➤ WOMEN: Sensitive to the early signs of disconnection
➤ Pursue by blaming to get a comforting response
➤ MEN: Suppress emotional responses and needs so withdraw
➤ Her anger, his withdrawal mask the underlying need for connection
➤ Fight: Protest over emotional disconnection: Are you there for me?
➤ Creates emotional distance
Empathetic response creates safety
Guide partners into responsiveness to each other
More than conflict containment; Better communication is linked to security
Best predictor for EFT: Females had faith partner cared
GOD ATTACHMENT

➤ Created in His Image
➤ Understand our brokenness and His pursuit of us
➤ Unconditionally loved
➤ Complete trust and commitment in Him
➤ Healing and transformation
➤ He is the corrective experience
➤ Our goal is to deepen our intimacy with Christ-Glorify God and enjoy Him
Conflict Style Assessment

What is your primary conflict style? Based on Dr. Linda Mintle's new book *We Need to Talk: How to Successfully Navigate Conflict* Learn more Here

"How we deal with conflict will either grow a relationship or destroy it."

Take the free assessment today and learn your conflict style:

www.DrLindaMintle.com

Like
THE AVOIDER

- Conflict involves other people whom you can’t control
- Discomfort
- Family patterns
- Experience is negative
- Don’t have to take a position
- Live in denial
THE PRICE OF AVOIDANCE

➤ Initially reduces stress, don’t feel better the next day, tension grows

➤ Physical symptoms and negative well-being increase—we pay a price

➤ Explosions and sudden eruptions

➤ Irritability if simmers below the surface, disengage, feel powerless

➤ Exception: Safety concerns
➤ Love to argue, take the conflict head on
➤ Positive and negative emotions
➤ Deal with differences head on
➤ At times can be aggressive
VALIDATORS

➤ Calm, reasonable
➤ Value differences
➤ Listen well
➤ Want a solution
STYLES

➤ Hostile
➤ Competitive
➤ Accommodating
CLASH OF STYLES

Exercise
